

ABM

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Pentagon Imposes ABM Information 'Blackout'

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The Pentagon has ordered "a total information blackout" to keep contractors from publicizing the Nike X antimissile system.

The new order is designed to stave off pressure aerospace firms might put on their Senators and Representatives to build the multibillion-dollar missile defense.

Congress is pondering whether the U.S. should install a missile defense to match the one Russia is developing.

An Army spokesman at the Pentagon said it is the service's policy not to let issues like Nike X be argued through advertisements and publications. The Army is in charge of Nike X.

He said the information rules on Nike X were more of a reminder of this existing Army policy than a new clampdown.

But the actual message that has gone out to Nike X contractors tells them to keep quiet about the system until further notice.

The information gag is another

measure of how hard the Johnson Administration is trying to avoid taking the plunge into Nike X production and deployment.

Bell Telephone Laboratories is in charge of the design and development of the Nike X. Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara meets frequently with Bell's top executives to keep track of progress.

Bell Labs recently sent its associate contractors working on Nike X this message: Army Brig. Gen. Ivey O. Drewry, Jr., Nike project manager at Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville,

Ala., "has advised us that the Department of Defense has instituted a total information blackout on the Nike X project until further notice."

"This covers every type of information," the Bell Labs message continues, "including technical papers. The only exception is classified technical papers."

"Based on past experience, it seems likely this blackout should continue until the production question for fiscal year 1968 is decided and agreed upon by Congress."

The Pentagon also has been